

OrdnanceReports

News updates from around the world



April 16, 2003



This publication is produced by the U.S. Army Ordnance Corps Communications Coordinator. The purpose of this publication is to provide Command Information materiel concerning world events and the U.S. military's role in those events. Ordnance specific events will be covered if appropriate. Direct your correspondence to Ed Starnes at 410-278-2415 (DSN 298-2415), or email edward.starnes@ocs.apg.army.mil.

EOD teams cleaning up streets of Iraq

by Pfc. Joshua Hutcheson

AN NAJAF, Iraq (Army News Service, April 14, 2003)

— As the fighting begins to subside across Iraq, Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams are beginning the work of ridding the country of devices such as grenades, rockets, missiles and mortars that remain buried in fields, streets and front yards.

“My guys take risks in order to minimize the risks to others,” said Capt. Bryan Sopko, commander of the 725th EOD Company, from Fort Drum, N.Y. His unit is currently assigned to provide direct mission support to the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) in Iraq, as the division secures towns throughout the country.

After a two-day drive earlier this month from Kuwait to Camp Eagle III, several miles from An Najaf, soldiers of the 725th EOD Company had just enough time to unload some gear and take a quick stretch before they were told to proceed into the city. They were asked to take care of a dangerous situation at an agricultural school where 1st Brigade, 101st, had set up its tactical operations center.

A weapons cache found in the school, along with others found throughout the city, were to be taken to a pit and disposed of. But the procedure wasn't simple: many of the explosive devices were spread over a large area. Some unexploded ordnance, or UXO, was in the form of debris, and some, including a mortar round, was intact and located within yards of where soldiers worked and lived.

EOD came in to finish what 1st Brigade started. Its job was to locate all of the unexploded ordnance, collect it, figure out what was armed and what wasn't, and dispose of the ordnance in the safest manner possible.

Sopko decided to bring four EOD teams to An Najaf. Three of Sopko's teams drove HUMVEEs, and were referred to as light teams. The light teams have two soldiers, one of which is usually a staff sergeant, and a vehicle to carry the multitude of equipment they need.



Pfc. Robert Wiltshire walks along a section of road littered with golf ball-sized bombs in the city of An Najaf. (photo by Pfc. Joshua Hutcheson)

The larger team, called a heavy team, works out of a Light Medium Tactical Vehicle and has three members. This team is usually led by a sergeant first class; Sopko said they are the “heavy-hitters.”

The teams arrived at the school and found out from 1st Brigade that there was a more explosive situation in Najaf than they had expected. Besides the UXO at 1st Brigade, there was also an Iraqi truck in the city that was full of rockets painted with potential chemical symbols.

continued on page 2

EOD teams cleaning up streets of Iraq continued

EOD leaders decided to send two teams to check out the UXO site, and two teams to assess the situation with the Iraqi truck.

The teams at 1st Brigade, consisting of Staff Sgt. Aaron Burns, team leader, Pfc. Robert Wiltshire, Spc. Jeffery Dills, and Spc. Jennifer Thomsen, got to work going over a pile of ordnance that was collected and not yet disposed of. They checked to see what had been fired and what hadn't.

If the teams came across something that was armed, they disarmed it. Halfway through the reorganizing, Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Mami, team leader for the heavy team, drove up to the workers and warned them about touching certain mortars.

"I've just been told that the building (the mortars) came from came up hot for chem.," he said.

The mortars were discovered in a building that tested positive for containing mustard gas. These mortars had been brought out and lumped together with other mortars from around town. This information didn't make it to EOD until the last minute, but the soldiers had not yet reached that section of the UXO and had not been exposed.

Meanwhile, across town, two teams, Staff Sgt. Michael Taylor and Sgt. Mason Holquist, along with Staff Sgt. David Sander and Spc. Thomas Craft, were examining the truck full of missiles and rockets. They used a digital camera to better identify what they were dealing with. They returned with the pictures to show Sopko.



Capt. Bryan Sopko and Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Mami examine a cache of unexploded ordnance at an agricultural school in An Najaf. (photos by Pfc. Joshua Hutcheson)

continued on page 3



A destroyed Iraqi weapons cache in Dog East, a major battle site near An Najaf.

U.S. troops to be in Iraq ‘not one day longer’ than necessary, Myers says

by Gerry J. Gilmore, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 15, 2003—American troops will be in Iraq “as long as required and not one day longer,” the U.S. military’s senior officer said here today.

Saddam Hussein’s regime is history and “the process of returning Iraq to the Iraqi people has begun,” Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Arab and Muslim journalists at the Foreign Press Center.

And Iraq’s global coin of the realm – oil – has been secured for the future of all Iraqis, Myers pointed out.

The general asserted that that oil revenue will be harnessed by newly freed Iraqis “to develop their country after decades of neglect” by Saddam’s despotic regime.

Myers pointed out, however, that while major combat operations are finished in Iraq, U.S. and coalition forces continue to run into pockets of regime diehards.

In fact, President Bush noted today during a Rose Garden press briefing that victory in Iraq isn’t complete.

“There is more to do,” Myers agreed, including finding and eliminating any weapons of mass destruction, expanding humanitarian relief and assisting Iraqi’s to get their infrastructure – to include the country’s police and fire departments — back on its feet.

And “we must help the Iraqi people create the conditions for a rapid transition to a representative self-government that is not a threat to its neighbors,” Myers continued, “and is committed to ensuring the territorial integrity of that country.”

Myers pointed out that Iraqi leaders were meeting today in Ur to discuss their future government with retired U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Jay Garner, who heads the U.S.-led interim administration in Iraq. The delegates agreed to meet again in 10 days.

At today’s meeting in Ur, U.S. administration official Zalmay Khalilzad told Iraqi delegates the United States has zero interest in ruling Iraq.

“Iraq has to figure out how to govern itself in the future,” Myers emphasized.

U.S. military forces in the Persian Gulf region are drawing down, Myers pointed out, noting that two of the five aircraft carriers deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom – the USS Kitty Hawk and Constellation — are slated to soon head home.

And B-2 stealth bombers, F-117 stealth fighters and other aircraft, Myers added, are also returning home.

“We have begun transitioning from combat operations to working with local Iraqis to stabilize and secure Iraq’s cities and towns,” the general pointed out.

Myers emphasized that the U.S. military and its coalition partners are in Iraq to “support the Iraqi people as they rebuild their nation.”

EOD teams cleaning up streets of Iraq continued

The teams retired that night, forming plans about what to do in the morning. They slept on the vehicles, on the hoods, on the roofs, anywhere there was room. They said this was a regular routine; in fact, Wiltshire said their trucks are their life.

Each truck is a self-contained EOD lab with equipment to disarm explosive devices, or to blow them up. Inside there’s C-4 plastic explosive, and linear shape charges that can be made into different shapes for ease in demolition, Wiltshire said. Demolishing ordnance is easier than disarming because it requires less work and it’s safer for the tech, Burns said.

EOD techs spend 10 months in job training at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. The school teaches all branches of the military. Students learn how to disarm everything from chemical and biological explosives to homemade pipe bombs. The training is rigorous and difficult, said Sopko, with a 60 percent dropout rate.

After graduating, techs are assigned to EOD companies. At one point there were only 800 EOD techs in the Army, so the military enacted stop-loss a year ago to keep units up to strength.

Techs start out getting equipment and doing setup work for the senior member of the team, Wiltshire said. Wiltshire is also called “Rook” because he’s the newest member of the company.



Staff Sgt. Aaron Burns and Pfc. Robert Wiltshire open a box of mortar rounds discovered at an agricultural school in the city of An Najaf.

After the junior members have enough experience and know the ropes, the team leader might send them out to do the dangerous work, Thomsen said.

continued on page 4

EOD teams cleaning up streets of Iraq continued

EOD is one of the few jobs where the seniors take the risks and the junior enlisted don't, Sopko said. This allows the trainees to learn from the team leader's experience.

The next morning, the EOD teams were faced with a new situation. During a bombing run by coalition forces a week earlier, a bomb had been dropped on an Iraqi truck carrying rockets filled with KB-1 submunition — little golf ball-sized bombs. The truck had been hit in the middle of a street in Najaf. An engineering team came through the area and roped off part of the road for the safety of civilians.

The locals were still driving on the road, though, and lifting the ropes and razor wire to get through. Adults, children and animals walked in the blackened blast area without caution in their steps.

The four EOD teams pulled up to the area and parked hundreds of yards away. Two teams stayed by the vehicles for protection and crowd control, and three techs walked out into the danger area to see the extent of the damage.

A number of Iraqis tried to help the techs by pointing out where some hidden UXO was, off the street in fields and in people's houses. The techs nodded and did what they could to let the people know that they were there to clean everything up.

Once the soldiers came back from checking out the area, the teams decided to remote detonate the UXO with C-4 plastic explosives.

Psychological Operations units drove up and down the street playing a warning in Arabic from large speakers mounted on top of the vehicles for all the civilians to stay away for their own safety.

The techs then set up for a remote demolition, in which they would be able to safely stay behind their vehicles. Once the fire extinguishers were out of the vehicles and ready, the techs began.

"It's all very deliberate, that's the best word to use," Sopko said.

"We're the most safety-conscious soldiers in the Army," Mami said.

The techs spent the afternoon setting off multiple explosions. The sounds of the blasts reached for blocks, pleasing children and scaring civilians in vehicles.

Since April 10, the 725th has destroyed 8,739 projectiles, 14 U.S.-made submunitions, 187 U.S.S.R.-made submunitions, 54 rockets, 2,605 fuses and 16,800 small arms.

"It's interesting (in Iraq) because you see things here with explosives



Capt. Bryan Sopko and Staff Sgt. Michael Taylor cut strips of C-4 plastic explosive to use with remote detonators on explosive devices lying on a street in An Najaf.



Staff Sgt. David Sander gets ready to set off controlled blasts on a street in An Najaf with a remote detonator. (photos by Pfc. Joshua Hutchison)

and ordnance that you wouldn't see anywhere else," Burns said.

"I'm just having fun seeing new stuff," Wiltshire said.

(Editor's note: Pfc. Joshua Hutchison is a member of the 101st Airborne Division public affairs section.)

www.goarmy.com

Visit the U.S. Army Ordnance Corps

www.goordnance.apg.army.mil

Coalition captures terrorist, Brooks describes Mosul incident

by Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 16, 2003 – Coalition special operations personnel in Baghdad captured Palestinian terrorist Abu Abbas April 14, U.S. Central Command officials said today.

Abu Abbas, also known as Mohammad Abbas, planned the 1985 hijacking of the Italian cruise liner Achille Lauro in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. In the course of that hijacking a wheelchair-bound American citizen, Leon Klinghoffer, was murdered.

Abbas lived in a southern Baghdad. “Abbas was described as the secretary general of the Palestine Liberation Front,” said Army Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks during a briefing at Qatar. “Abu Abbas is a terrorist. He was a terrorist and he remains a terrorist, and he will be viewed as such.”

Brooks, the vice chief of operations at the command, said Abu Abbas’ role in terrorism and his links to other terrorist organizations are clear. “Perhaps what’s more important: He was found in Baghdad,” he said. “We’ve said for a long time that Baghdad and Iraq, and the regime that no longer exists, have harbored terrorists, have provided a safe haven for terrorists and in some cases have facilitated the operations of terrorists.”

Brooks said coalition forces continue with efforts to find terrorist links and organizations in Iraq.

Brooks discussed an incident in the northern city of Mosul April 15 that continues under investigation. “A preliminary report tells us that a coalition special operations force with civil affairs and reinforced by Marines ... went into an area they had selected to be used as a regional coordinating center,” he said. It was a former government building with a retaining wall around it, he noted.

After the first group entered the building, more Marines joined them, Brooks said. The second Marine group had to move through a large crowd of Iraqis who threw rocks at them, and hit and spit on them,



The Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro sails for home after the end of a week-long hijacking ordeal in 1985. Abul Abbas, the leader of the Palestinian group that killed an American on the hijacked cruise liner Achille Lauro in 1985, has been captured in Baghdad, U.S. officials said Tuesday, April 15, 2003. (AP Photo)

the general said.

The Marines took up positions to secure the area. “At a later time, the crowd became even more incensed and agitated,” he said. The crowd turned over civilian vehicles and set fire to them and “the actions became increasingly violent.”

The coalition forces observed men with weapons in the crowd firing into the air. “Warning shots were fired by coalition forces into a field beyond where the crowd was forming,” Brooks said.

“Thereafter, fire was directed at Marines and special operations forces at this complex. It was aimed fire, and aimed fire was then returned against some of the demonstrators, some of the agitated persons who were now climbing over the wall of the compound.

“Fire was indeed delivered by coalition forces, it was lethal fire, and some Iraqis were killed because of that,” Brooks continued. He put the number killed at about seven.

He said the compound was under attack from two sides and coalition forces again observed men with weapons in the crowd.

Ridge lowers terrorist threat level to yellow

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 16, 2003 – Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge has lowered the nationwide threat level to “yellow” from “orange.”

Ridge said in a written statement that he made the decision after assessing all applicable intelligence and following consultations with the Homeland Security Council.

A yellow level is still listed as a “high” threat. Orange is “elevated.” Ridge raised the level on March 17, when President Bush issued the ultimatum to Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. Hostilities started against Iraq on March 19.

“While we continue to be at risk to the threat of terrorism at an elevated level, extensive protective measures remain in place

throughout our nation,” Ridge’s statement says.

“We must be vigilant and alert to the possibility that al Qaeda and those sympathetic to their cause, as well as former Iraqi-regime state agents and affiliated organizations, may attempt to conduct attacks against the U.S. or our interests abroad,” he wrote.

Ridge thanked the many civilian leaders and first responders nationwide for their support and cooperation since March 17. “They have protected our freedom at home in this time of war while their brave counterparts in our armed forces are fighting for this same cause thousands of miles away in Operation Iraqi Freedom,” he said in the statement.

“The signal we have sent our enemies over the past few weeks has been clear: We will continue to resolutely defend our nation and its freedom.”



A U.S. Marine guards a check point as a truck filled with looted goods passes by in Baghdad Wednesday, April 16, 2003. Spurred by danger of increasing civil unrest in Iraq, several European leaders suggested Wednesday they may send troops to help stabilize the country. (AP Photo/ Dusan Vranic)

Pentagon warns of flea and tick collar dangers

by Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample, USA, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 16, 2003—The Pentagon is, once again, advising service members that flea and tick collars work great on pets, but not on humans.

And officials at the Armed Forces Pest Management Board said good-intentioned citizens and family members should not include the collars in care packages to troops.

Responding to reports that persons as well as organizations are sending pet collars to troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, Army Maj. Dwight Rickard, contingency liaison officer for the board, said an AFPMB memorandum issued in early April warns of the dangers involved.

“The fact that some organizations with good intentions were doing this concerned us,” Rickard said. “But the fact is that flea and tick collars are not approved for humans and in fact are quite detrimental to the skin. Our skin is different from that of dogs, and the pesticides tend to burn our skin,” he explained.

There is also potential to absorb pesticides into the skin, which “as you can imagine, is not healthy,” he added.

Flea and tick collars contain the pesticides organophosphates, carbamates, pyrethroids and organochloride. The EPA states these chemicals may produce adverse effects and they have not been tested for human use.

Back in September 1990, the Army’s Health Services Command had

released a message warning that prolonged exposure to the collars could produce toxic effects in humans. Shortly thereafter, post and base exchange stores put up signs to warn of the dangers.

In 1999, the Rand Corp., a research firm, surveyed thousands of Persian Gulf War veterans on their use of pesticides in that war as the Defense Department searched for possible links to illnesses in Gulf War veterans. The survey did not provide definite evidence of a link to Gulf War illness, but a number of veterans had reported using pet flea and tick collars to protect themselves against insects.

From the survey data, about 3 percent of Army and Marine Corps/ Navy personnel and about 1 percent of Air Force personnel among the almost 470,000 serving in the Gulf are estimated to have used animal flea and tick collars. The survey stated that most veterans who used flea collars wore them over their clothes or shoes, which helped minimize exposure to the active ingredient.

However, Rickard said the best way to protect against fleas and ticks is to use measures found in AFPMB Technical Guide-36, entitled “Personal Protective Measures Against Insects.” The guide describes DoD’s insect repellent system and other techniques to ward off flea, tick and chigger attack.

Rickard emphasized that the collars work very well on dogs, but hardly at all on humans. “If you put them on a humans, the fleas and ticks won’t go near the collar, but they will go everywhere else,” he said.

To learn more about the DoD insect repellent system, visit the pest management board’s Web site at <http://www.afpmb.org>.

Many diehard fighters in Iraq aren't Iraqis, Myers says

by Gerry J. Gilmore, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 16, 2003 – Many snipers, suicide bombers and other diehards attacking U.S. and coalition troops in Iraq are non-Iraqis waging holy war, the U.S. military's senior officer said April 15.

"A large portion ... they're actually foreigners," Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said on CNN's "Larry King Live."

"They're some of the so-called jihadists that have infiltrated into Iraq" to fight for Saddam Hussein's now-defunct regime, Myers remarked to the television talk show host.

The four-star general told King that although major combat is over in Iraq, there's still military work to be done, as U.S. and coalition troops conduct presence patrols and assist humanitarian relief efforts.

However, there are "some pockets of resistance that we still need to deal with that can be very deadly," Myers pointed out. He said he was sure there are U.S. and coalition troops in Iraq "dodging bullets, that are worried about suicide bombers coming up to the checkpoints."

Much of that resistance, he noted, seems to be composed of fanatical foreigners devoted to jihad, or holy war, against perceived enemies of Islam.

A lot of the Saddam-regime diehards still battling U.S. and coalition troops in Iraq are not Iraqis, Myers pointed out, "but they've come there for jihad, and are fighting for that."

But where could the jihadists be coming from? Pentagon and State Department officials have commented on the actions by the Syrian government during Operation Iraqi Freedom, noting war supplies like night-vision goggles were being sent from Syria to Iraqi forces.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell noted yesterday that coalition officials have been watchful of cross-border goods — and people — traffic between Iraq and Syria.

"Some of those individuals went from Syria into Iraq to oppose coalition forces," Powell said. He added that the United States is also concerned about Syria's weapons of mass destruction programs and its continuing support of terrorist groups.

U.S. officials have also warned the Syrian government against harboring any Saddam-regime escapees, criminals or terrorists.

There's also the oil pipeline between Iraq and Syria that was operating in violation of U.N. sanctions. U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said April 15 that U.S. forces in Iraq had shut it down.

Myers also told King that U.S. and coalition troops must still round up the remnants of Saddam's Special Republican Guard and violent Baathist Party operatives.

And "we still have a lot of work to do in finding and securing weapons of mass destruction sites, and making sure that those biological and chemical weapons don't fall into the hands of terrorists," the Joint Chiefs chairman said.



A television reporter does a stand up piece in front of the Palestine hotel in Baghdad Wednesday April 16, 2003. The U.S. Marines moved in, joining hundreds of international journalists and turning Baghdad's now-famous Palestine Hotel into a noisy, overstuffed island of rumor, gunshots and odd bedfellows in a city just coming back to life. (AP Photo/Hussein Malla)

Defend America News

**Global War
On Terrorism**

[CLICK HERE](#) for the latest News Photos Features

www.defendamerica.mil/

AFGHANISTAN

IRAQ

DJIBOUTI

PHILIPPINES

Blum takes helm of National Guard Bureau

by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell, National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, April 16, 2003) — The Army National Guard two-star general who helped form the United States Northern Command, the new military organization responsible for homeland security, has become the 25th chief of the National Guard Bureau.

H. Steven Blum will be promoted to lieutenant general and pinned with his third star as chief of the 466,000 members of the Army and Air National Guard now that the U.S. Senate has confirmed his Jan. 6 nomination by President George Bush. The Senate confirmed the four-year appointment on April 11.

Blum, 56, succeeds Lt. Gen. Russell Davis who retired as the Guard Bureau's chief in August. Maj. Gen. Raymond Rees has been acting chief since then.

Nearly 160,000 members of the Army and Air Guard, almost 35 percent of the total force, are on active duty or belong to units that have been identified for mobilization for the war against terrorism as Blum becomes the Guard Bureau's chief. Guard forces are involved in the largest mobilization of reserve-component troops since World War II.

The chief is the senior uniformed National Guard officer responsible for formulating, developing and coordinating all policies, programs and plans affecting Army and Air National Guard personnel. The general serves as the principal adviser to the secretary and chief of staff of the Army and the secretary and chief of staff of the Air Force on all National Guard issues. As NGB chief, he serves as the Army's and Air Force's official channel of communication with the governors and adjutants general.

Blum has been chief of staff for the commander of the Northern Command and the North American Aerospace Command at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado since August.

The Maryland Army Guard general coordinated the activities of all members of the five uniformed services, including the reserve components, assigned to the Northern Command. NORTHCOM was officially activated in Colorado Springs in October. It was the first military command formed solely to defend the continental United States since the Continental Army, commanded by General George Washington, was organized in 1775.

"There is no more important mission than the defense of this nation and the homeland," said Blum during an interview in September. "We cannot fail the American people. They have high expectations of us. We are defending our families, our friends, our way of life."

Now he will oversee the National Guard's overall commitment to that cause as well as to the war on terrorism overseas, including the war with Iraq. He will also be concerned with how well the Guard performs its traditional jobs of training for war and supporting civil authorities during natural disasters, such as floods and wildfires, and civil disturbances.

Blum paid his dues on the foreign front as commanding general of the Multinational Division North in Bosnia Herzegovina from September 2001 to April 2002. He commanded troops from other countries, including Russia and Turkey, during that time.

Blum assumed command in August 1999 of the Virginia Army Guard's 29th Infantry Division that provided the command and control element for that peacekeeping rotation in Bosnia. He commanded the 29th until last August when he was assigned to the Northern Command in Colorado.

The late historian Stephen Ambrose, who died in October, gave Blum high marks as a soldier and as a commander in his final book, "To America."

"At 55, he has had made 1,500 air drops. He has had open-heart surgery. He talks so well and thinks so swiftly and knows so much that he reminds me of Eisenhower in 1945, when Ike was fifty-five years old," wrote Ambrose after meeting Blum while visiting Bosnia with a group of World War II veterans during Thanksgiving 2001.

"We flew in helicopters together, we attended ceremonies, briefings, meals with the troops," Ambrose continued. "[Blum] was always fully concentrated. He is outstanding in his job as military commander and diplomat, as good as Ike was in Germany after World War II, although on a much smaller scale."

Blum is a native of Maryland and earned his bachelor's degree in history from the University of Baltimore in 1968. He received a master's degree in social science in 1973 from Morgan State College in Baltimore, and he attended the Army War College in 1989.

He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in August 1971 when he graduated with honors from the Maryland Army Guard's Officers Candidate School. He has been a Special Forces officer throughout his career, and has commanded at every level since taking charge of a detachment in the Maryland Army Guard's 20th Special Forces in November 1977.

Blum received his first star when he was promoted to brigadier general in August 1996, and he was promoted to major general in February 2000.

**OrdnanceReports
are archived at
[www.goordnance.apg.
army.mil/
ordnancereports.htm](http://www.goordnance.apg.army.mil/ordnancereports.htm)**

The Patriot Game

by Master Sgt. Phillip Copeland, USAF,
Special to American Forces Press
Service

WASHINGTON, April 15, 2003 — It was a memorable, symbolic night at the MCI Center here April 14 as Michael Jordan played the last home game of his legendary and illustrious basketball career. But it would be more than about a game between two NBA teams.

Fans sensed excitement even before game time when a thunderous standing ovation vibrated through the whole coliseum. But it was not because "His Airness" had brought his offensive play to the court. Rather, the raucous applause was for appearance of defense - as in Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld at center court, representing American military patriots serving worldwide and sacrificing their lives for freedom.

After minutes of genuine applause, a voice sounded through the noisy decibel level to announce that Rumsfeld would present Michael Jordan with a flag. Again, seizing upon this outpouring of patriotism and gratitude, this wasn't just any flag. It was one flown over the Pentagon Sept. 11, 2002, commemorating the one-year anniversary of the 9-11 terrorist attacks. Jordan received the flag in recognition of his support after the 9-11 terrorist attacks. He donated his 2001 salary, a reported \$1 million, to agencies working with the families of the victims in New York, the Pentagon and Pennsylvania.



Michael Jordan gestures across court during his final home game April 14 to spectator Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who presented him with an American flag before the game. Jordan said he's retiring for the last time as an NBA player when his team's season ends on April 16. Photo by Master Sgt. Phillip Copeland

Rumsfeld, with a grin, pointed to Jordan, who on cue walked onto the court to meet the secretary. The two men gripped in a firm handshake evoking great and mutual admiration. They exchanged words, heard only between them, yet understood by all who watched.

The drama of the night extended further beyond the two men: The two teams took to the court, representing cities victimized by the 9-

11 terrorist attacks. Washington and New York reflected the very fabric of a courageous country, symbols of the nation's relentless campaign against global terror and the quests for homeland security.

Players and fans alike savored every moment of the eventful evening. With two minutes left in the game, Jordan exited the court with a standing ovation that would last until game's end, with all eyes focused on the legendary player. After the team's last game of the season April 16, Jordan plans to retire from the NBA for the last time.

He had previously hung up his basketball shoes in 1993 and 1999. He came out of retirement again in 2001 and returned to play with the Washington Wizards, where he was president of basketball operations and part team owner.

Jordan's team, Wizards, would not emerge victorious this night. The New York Knicks would win 93-79.

But the night would be remembered not only for a star NBA player or a score between long-time Eastern Conference rivals. The image would rewind to those minutes before game time - to that American flag, bestowed by a world-known secretary of defense to a world-known ambassador of basketball. Their moment of bonding on the court would reverberate long after the final buzzer sounded.

(Master Sgt. Phillip Copeland is a web designer for the American Forces Press Service.)



U.S. soldiers stand guard as U.S. helicopter flies in the center of Mosul, northern Iraq Wednesday, April, 16, 2003. Three Iraqis were killed and 11 wounded Wednesday during a shooting in Mosul, and some victims said U.S. troops shot at them. U.S. Central Command said seven Iraqis died a day earlier when American troops opened fire to keep an angry crowd from storming a government complex. (AP Photo/Hasan Sarbakhshian)



A U.S. Central Command handout photograph, released Wednesday, April 16, 2003, shows Iraqi dignitaries and representatives gathered Tuesday, April 15, 2003 at Ziggurat temple at Tillil Air base, near the southern town of Nasiriyah, Iraq for a meeting to begin shaping Iraq's postwar government. Participants included Kurds and Sunni and Shiite Arabs from inside Iraq and others who spent years in exile. (AP Photo/U.S. Central Command)



A United States marine stands next to a vehicle where an explosive device was found on the bridge over the Tigris River near Tikrit, Iraq, Tuesday, April 15, 2003. Military officials confirmed a device was found and four men were being held.



A Marine walks out of a looted bank with the remaining money after he caught looters robbing from the bank in Baghdad on Wednesday. Photo by Spencer Platt / Getty Images

Soldiers with the 4th Infantry Division topple a statue of Saddam Hussein after taking over an airport 20 miles north of Baghdad on Wednesday. AP photo by Saurabh Das

